Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

SciVerse ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 49 (2012) 350 – 359

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

1nCEBS 2009 Shah Alam

1st National Conference on Environment-Behaviour Studies, Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, 14-15 November 2009

The Values of Parks to the House Residents

Farahwaheeda Shukur*, Noriah Othman & Abdul Hadi Nawawi,

Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract

The focus of this paper is to examine the significance of a park to the house residents. The methods used in this study include interviews with the developer and a survey administered to the residents living near the park. The main findings gathered from the survey reveal that five most important 'park-related factors' to house buyers are (i) good park elements, (ii) conceptual or design of the park, (iii) nearness to the park, (iv) existence of a view to the park, and (v) active area of the park facing the house.

Keywords: Parks; residential; house residents; survey; elements of park

1. Introduction

The importance and value of park has captured the attention of many levels of people include government, local authority, developer, planner, property buyer, residents and etc. Park can make our cities and neighborhood more attractive places to live and work. Park offers various opportunities to fulfill individual, social, economic and environmental benefits. For example, park offer opportunities for individual to enrich the quality of life at all ages and abilities. Ng (2005) reported that now, park and landscape is one of the most important selling points and has become a tool for developers to entice

* Corresponding author. Tel.: (006) 03-55444351; fax: (006) 03-55444353
E-mail address:farah.waheeda111@yahoo.com

doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.07.033

prospective buyers. Therefore, current developers that have noticed this kind of demands tend to improve the value of their property by introducing elements such as natural, green spaces and parks allocation to their design. Although many agree that park is important, there are some developers tend to provide a basic guideline approval in developing park. Many of their housing developments are severely lacking in park space. In line with the issues mentioned above, this paper has two objectives. The objectives are to determine park related and non-park related factors that affect value of houses and to identify the importance of parks to the house residents.

2. Benefits of Parks

The values of park to communities are many and varied. One of the benefits is for better environmental. Park areas that generally contain significant number of trees contribute in preserving and purifying the environment. As stated by Sherer (2005), trees in park or green areas can help reduce the temperature by creating shades. Park also play a role in reducing air pollution and reduce pollutants. Park may also serve a social function by poviding a meeting place where people or residents can develop social ties and setting. According to Waits (2008), the existence of parks in urban areas introduces nature to people through outdoor education. Other benefit is economic. According to Rung et al. (2005), crime is lower when park exist. Thus, settings in which there are more trees and vegetation in housing residents can inhibit crime, aggression and violence. the availability of recreation opportunities, consider alternatives in the types and locations of park are important quality of life factor for businesses choosing where to locate and for individuals choosing a place to live (Sasidharan et al., 2001). For housing, the value of house can increase if it is adjacent to park area. Previous research has noted that park also can enhancing sense of wellness. Walker (2004) cited that park users are found significantly healthier than non park users. People who engage in regular physical activity benefit from reduced risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension and weight loss.

3. Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the research, several techniques were employed including a review of the research area, interviews with representatives of developer and a survey of residents living in proximity to the park.

3.1. Research area

The research area comprise residential area in Bukit Jelutong, Shah Alam, Selangor. The map of peninsular Malaysia is shown in Figure 1. Bukit Jelutong Residential Area is chosen because of is strategically known as ‘sub-city’ to Shah Alam. The residential area also contains a variety of open spaces such as neighborhood park, pocket park, playground and small open green lungs. The research area are shown in Fig.2.

Fig.1. Map of Peninsular Malaysia

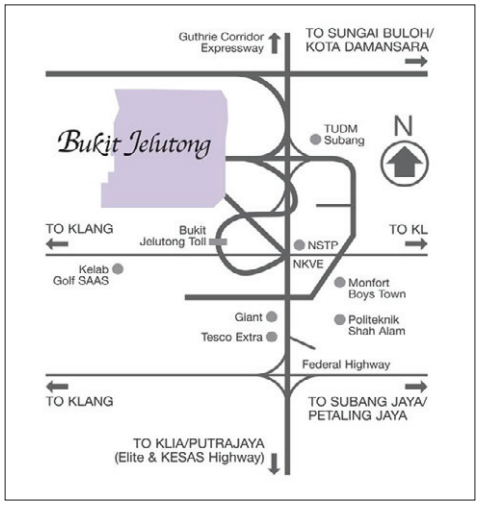

Fig.2. Map Showing Research Area - Bukit Jelutong

3.2. Interviews with developer

Interviews were conducted with head of three departments of Property Development, Sales and Marketing, Environmental Management or Landscaping of Sime Darby Berhad. The interviews were aims to obtain their perceptions on the values of park in their housing development. The interviews were completed within one month started April till May 2008. The researcher has developed an interview questions that contained five sections. Section one consists of the personal details of the interviewees while section two asked about the background and previous experience. Section three asked about the

questions on the factors that affect house values. Section four about the importance and values of park to the professional agency. Section five about their comment, opinions and suggestions in park and residential development.

3.3. A survey of residents living in proximity to the park

This survey was used to ascertain residents' perceptions to the values of park to the house residents. Survey techniques are widely and often used in descriptive and explanatory research (Neuman, 2003). The survey was administrated within three months from June to September 2008 using questionnaires. The total number of respondents that involves in this survey are 448. The questionnaire is carefully designed and presented in written form. Each respondent were asking to read the questions themselves and mark answers on a questionnaire. All given answers are analyzed and formatted into percentages and tables format. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section one consists of the demographic background of the respondents while section two covers the factors that affect house values. Section three includes the importance and values of park to the house residents. The questionnaire contains close-ended, open ended questions and likert scale questions.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Interview Results

Opinions from three representatives of Sime Darby Berhad were fairly consistent regarding the importance and the values of the existence of park to Bukit Jelutong Residential Area. All of them agreed that park is one of the determine factors that normally affect the value of houses in that area.

4.2. Survey Results

There are 448 numbers of respondents selected and a total of 288 questionnaires were completed at a response rate of 64.3% (Table 1).

Table 1.Survey Response Rate

Description	Frequency	% response
Answered	288	64.3%
Non-answered	160	35.7%
Total	448	100%

4.2.1. Mean Results for Determining Park Related and Non-Park Related Factors That Affect Value of Houses

This analysis is to achieve the first objective of the research i.e. to determine park related and non-park related factors that affect value of houses.

4.2.1.1. Ranking of the Mean Results for Park Related Factors

The results show that the mean of park variables are above 4 that showed all are important except house facing park, existence of view to open space, house backing park, passive area of park facing house and accessibility to park (Table 2).

Table 2. Ranking of the Mean Results for Park Variables

Park variables	Mean	Rank
Good park elements	4.43	1
Conceptual or design of park	4.42	2
Nearness to park	4.30	3
Existence of view to park	4.25	4
Active area of park facing house	4.00	5
Housing facing park	3.72	6
Existence of view to open space	3.28	7
House backing park	3.21	8
Passive area of park facing house	3.10	9
Accessibility to park	2.45	10

Notes: Important rating scale is 1=extremely not important, 2=not important, 3= moderate, 4= important, 5=very important.

4.2.1.2. Ranking of the Mean Results for Non-Park Related Factors
Locational and Neighborhood Variables

The results obtained the mean of locational and neighborhood variables are above 4 that showed all are important except proximity to religious house, accessibility to highways or major road, proximity to petrol pump station and distance to Central Business District (Table 3).

Table 3.Ranking of the Mean Results for Locational and Neighborhood Variables

Locational and Neighborhood Variables	Mean	Rank
Locational topography	4.52	1
Privacy of neighborhoods	4.49	2
Security or safety of neighborhoods	4.40	3
Maintenance level or quality of neighborhoods	4.39	4
The prestige of Bukit Jelutong	4.27	5
Proximity to public service	4.06	6
Location of the house	4.03	7
Proximity to religious house	3.94	8
Accessibility to highways or major road	3.88	9
Proximity to petrol pump station	3.52	10
Distance to Central Business District	2.32	11

Notes: Important rating scale is 1=extremely not important, 2=not important, 3= moderate, 4= important, 5=very important.

Building Variables

As can be seen from the Table 4 below, the mean of building variables that showed moderate are fence and intermediate lot.

Table 4.Ranking of the Mean Results for Building Variables

Building variables	Mean	Rank
House size	4.55	1
Lot size	4.54	2
Sale or rent price	4.53	3
Resale value or investment	4.53	3
Good design of house (interior or exterior)	4.48	4
Number of room	4.48	4
Number of bathroom	4.45	5
State of repair	4.43	6
House type	4.43	6
House extension	4.36	7
Good exterior condition of house	4.35	8
Parking	4.22	9
Kitchen cabinet	4.22	9
Floor finishes	4.18	10
Kitchen extension	4.10	11
Corner lot	4.09	12
Green area in house lot	4.07	13
Fence	3.83	14
Intermediate lot	3.74	15

4.2.2. Mean Results for Park Elements

This analysis is to achieve the second objective of the research i.e. to identify the importance of park to the house residents. In this section, the elements of park divided into three which are the softscapes, hardscapes and wildlife.

4.2.2.1. Ranking of the Mean Results for Softcapes Elements

Table 5 below presents the ranking of the mean result for softscapes. It can be seen that shade tree is highly preferred according to the ranking of the mean results. Only annual plant (mean=1.84) and fruit tree (mean=1.57) were rated lower by the respondents.

Table 5. Ranking of the Mean Results for Softscape

Softcapes	Mean	Rank
Shade tree	4.64	1
Foliage shrub	4.35	2
Grasses or turf	4.35	2
Flowering shrub	4.27	3
Groundcover	3.85	4
Single trunk	3.76	5
Climbers	2.91	6
Aquatic plant	2.88	7
Multiple trunk	2.50	8
Creepers	2.05	9
Annual plant	1.84	10
Fruit tree	1.57	11

Notes: Important rating scale is 1=extremely not important, 2=not important, 3= moderate, 4= important, 5=very important.

Ranking of the Mean Results for Hardscape Elements

Table 6 below shows the ranking of the mean results for hardscapes. Lighting is highly preferred according to the ranking of the mean results. Only skate-park is rated lower by respondents.

Table 4. Ranking of the Mean Result for Hardscape

Hardscapes	Mean	Rank
Lighting	4.76	1
Dustbin	4.71	2
Children playground	4.70	3
Bench	4.69	4
Jogging path	4.68	5
Exercise station	4.66	6
Gazebo	4.66	6
Entrance signage	4.63	7
Instruction signage	4.58	8
Walkway	4.55	9
Directional signage	4.50	10
Pergola	4.44	11
Retaining wall	4.38	12
Reflexology path	4.33	13
Parking	4.18	14

Water with fountain	4.16	15
Warning alarm	4.01	16
Railing	3.99	17
Public toilet	3.94	18
Guardhouse	3.66	19
Steps	3.65	20
Water without fountain	3.50	21
Bus stop	3.13	22
Multipurpose court	2.92	23
Skate park	1.73	24

Notes: Important rating scale is 1=extremely not important, 2=not important, 3= moderate, 4= important, 5=very important.

Ranking of the Mean Results for Wildlife Elements

Table 7 shows the ranking of the mean results for wildlifes. It is reported that butterfly is the most preferred according to the ranking of the mean results. The second most preferred is birds. Firefly and dragonfly are ranked third and fourth priority respectively. These are followed by ladybird, fish and squirrel except for beetle which is lower preferred and ranked the least.

Table 5. Ranking of the Mean Result for Wildlifes

Wildlifes	Mean	Rank
Butterfly	4.17	1
Birds	3.91	2
Firefly	3.74	3
Dragonfly	3.44	4
Ladybird	3.18	5
Fish	2.44	6
Squirrel	1.86	7
Beetle	1.84	8

Notes: Priority rating scale is 1=lowest, 2=lower, 3=moderate, 4=higher, 5=highest

The objective of this study is to determine park related and non-park related factors that affect value of houses and to identify the importance of parks to house residents. The results of the first objective of this study show that there are five most important park related factors to house residents. One is good park element, two is conceptual or design of park, three is nearness to park, four is existence of view to the park and five is active area of park facing house. Two factors were identified for non-park related factors are locational topography and house size. The results of the second objective of this study show that shade tree for softscape, lighting for hardscape and butterfly for wildlife are highly preferred by respondents. Good park element was chosen as the most important factor and received the highest mean rating. Other factors were related to conceptual or design of park. If a park is not properly planned, it can often bring negative factors into the residential area. According to Richard (2008) and Paul (2006), the

best design of park should consists a good arrangement of park elements, variations of features and facilities, appearance, connections and have a safe and protection to meet needs and people interests. This is supported by Noah (1999) who found that park with a good character has a positive impact on people's perceptions.

Nearness to park was viewed as important by respondents. Some respondents stated that one of the reasons to purchase the house is because the house is located near to park. Their preference is supported by Elmendorf (2001) mentioned that the value of properties close to park can create a positive impact to neighborhood. The researcher also found that the existence of view to park and active area of park facing house have also received attention from house buyers. These findings did support previous studies on park and open space importance reported in the literature (Elmendorf, 2001; Nicholls, 2002). They agreed that view is important and park with more facilities that serve active experience are more likely to be used by people. For non-park related factors, respondents have chosen locational topography and house size as their most important factor according to the ranking. Kauko (2003) explained that location of topography usually influences property values. As expected, house size is also important. Residents positively perceived house size as important factors in terms of their influence on their decision to purchase their current house. According to respondents, shade tree, lighting and butterfly are highly preferred for elements of parks. According to Walker (1990) trees with large canopies provide shade and shelter when they are planted at park areas. For lighting, the presence of this element can provide a greater range and choice of time in which the park is accessible for use. There are high preferences for butterfly. A few respondents mentioned that they like the butterfly most. Therefore, the respondents rank butterfly as top priority for its category. Overall, this research found that house residents in Bukit Jelutong are aware on green and healthy environment. It is hoped that the needs and preference elements that has been chosen by respondents can be taken as reference by all parties involves in this industry especially in park and residential development.

5. Conclusion

From the research findings, it can be concluded that park have many benefits and serve multiple role no matter where it is located whether in residential areas, urban areas or etc. In residential areas, park serves an important function in creating a sense of a neighborhood and it surroundings. For future research, there are many suggestions can be made regarding park and property. Further research might advised to explore on larger geographic areas containing the quantity of park, type of open space and amenities i.e. greenbelt, golf course and type of houses. More case studies areas are also require for comparison.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express gratitude to the house residents, experts, individuals, groups and other related bodies which involved in this research.

References

Elmendorf, W. F. (2001). The *importance of leaders' and residents attitudes towards open space in developing Pennsylvania watershed.* Doctor of Philosophy. Pennsylvania State University.

Kauko, T. (2003). Residential property value and locational externalities. On the complementarity and substitutability of approaches. *Journal of Property Investment and Finance*, 21(3), 250-270.

Map of Bukit Jelutong. Retrieved August 10, 2009 from http://www.malaxi.com/selangor/shah_alam/bukit_jelutong_map.html
Map of Peninsular Malaysia. Retrieved August 10, 2009 from http://www.mymalaysiabooks.com/images/malaysia_states.jpg
Noah, B. (1999). *Parks and recreation. A role as old as it will be new*. Parks and Recreation, 6-12.
Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 5th edition. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
Ng, A. (2005). *Gamuda offers vast expanse of green to home buyers.* The Star. January 17, 2005.
Nicholls, S. (2002). *Does open space pay? Measuring the impacts of green spaces on property values and the property tax base. Doctor* of Philosophy, Texas A & M University.
Paul, K. (2006). *Designing small parks: A manual for addressing social and ecological concerns. Journal of the American Planning* Association, 72(4), 518-520.
Richard, J. D. (2008). *Advocacy update: Safety on. Parks and Recreation,* 43(8), 14-17.
Rung, B. A. L., Mowen, A. J. and Cohen, D. A. (2005). The significance of parks to physical activity and public health. A conceptual model. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28(2S2), 159-168.
Sasidharan, V., Yarnal, C., Yarnal, B. and Godbey, G. (2001). Climate change: What does it means for parks and recreation management? Parks and Recreation, 36(3), 54-60.
Sherer, P. M. (2005). *The benefits of parks. Why America needs more city parks and open space.* Retrieved April 4, 2009, from http://scholar.google.com.my/scholar
Waits, J. (2008). Urban green space: Is it the next financial frontier. *Business Perspectives*, 19(3), 36-39.
Walker, C. (2004). *The public value of urban parks*. Retrieved February 20, 2009 from http://scholar.google.com.my/scholar
Walker, T. D. (1990). *Residential landscaping 1*. Planning/design/construction. Second edition. USA: Van Nostrand Reinhold.